

GULF OF MEXICO EDUCATORS SUMMIT ON SCIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**Needs and opportunities identified by Gulf States in Education White Paper:**

- ♦ “The pressures on formal classroom educators leave little time to enable them to incorporate existing resources into daily lesson plans. Materials meant for the classroom use must be fully developed and standards-based for use in the classroom prior to introduction to the educator.”
- ♦ “Continue and enhance workshops, teacher-in-services, and trainings that provide relevant environmental resources to the participants.”
- ♦ “In order to stay current with environmental education, long-term sustainable funding needs to be established to maintain up-to-date technology and information for students at the K-12 level.”
- ♦ “Develop and strengthen existing coastal public outreach task forces: a group of area or regional environmental education professionals that provide a network of support and information exchange.”

Federal Response: Though a partnering with other Federal, state, and local agencies, the Federal Workgroup proposes a Gulf of Mexico Educators Summit on Science and the Environment (ESSE), to be held during the fall of 2005.

Summit participants would include educators within the five Gulf of Mexico states and Mexico. The purpose would be to expose teachers to the wealth of educational materials and opportunities related to science and the environment that are currently available, including fully-developed lesson plans and teacher training programs. Ideally, funding would be available on a competitive basis to support teacher travel to the summit, on the condition that the selected teacher returns to his or her district to make at least one presentation to other interested teachers. This group of teachers would become a network and conduit for future contact and material dissemination. To facilitate travel, the location would be held in a central location, such as Tallahassee, FL.

The proposed format would be a one-day event, with approximately three-quarters of the day dedicated to presentations by Federal agencies and other organizations on current educational materials and programs. The other one-quarter of the day would be dedicated to obtaining the educators' feedback and help in developing a comprehensive strategy and specific curriculum needs for Gulf education. A report of the event, including a listing of educational materials and contacts and a summary of the educators' feedback, would be developed and distributed.

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Federal Workgroup Co-leads: NOAA, EPA

Other partners: U.S. Department of Education, DOI, Smithsonian, NSF, NASA, DOE, USDA, ACOE, HHS/FDA, DOD, DOS

This Federal Response Proposal represents an initial project idea from the 13 agencies represented on the Federal Workgroup, in response to the Gulf State Alliance white papers; it is meant to stimulate discussion, among the Gulf State Alliance and the Federal Workgroup, as they work toward the development of a draft Gulf Plan of Action. Implementation of this project idea is subject to further evaluation and the availability of funding.